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"Life's race well run"

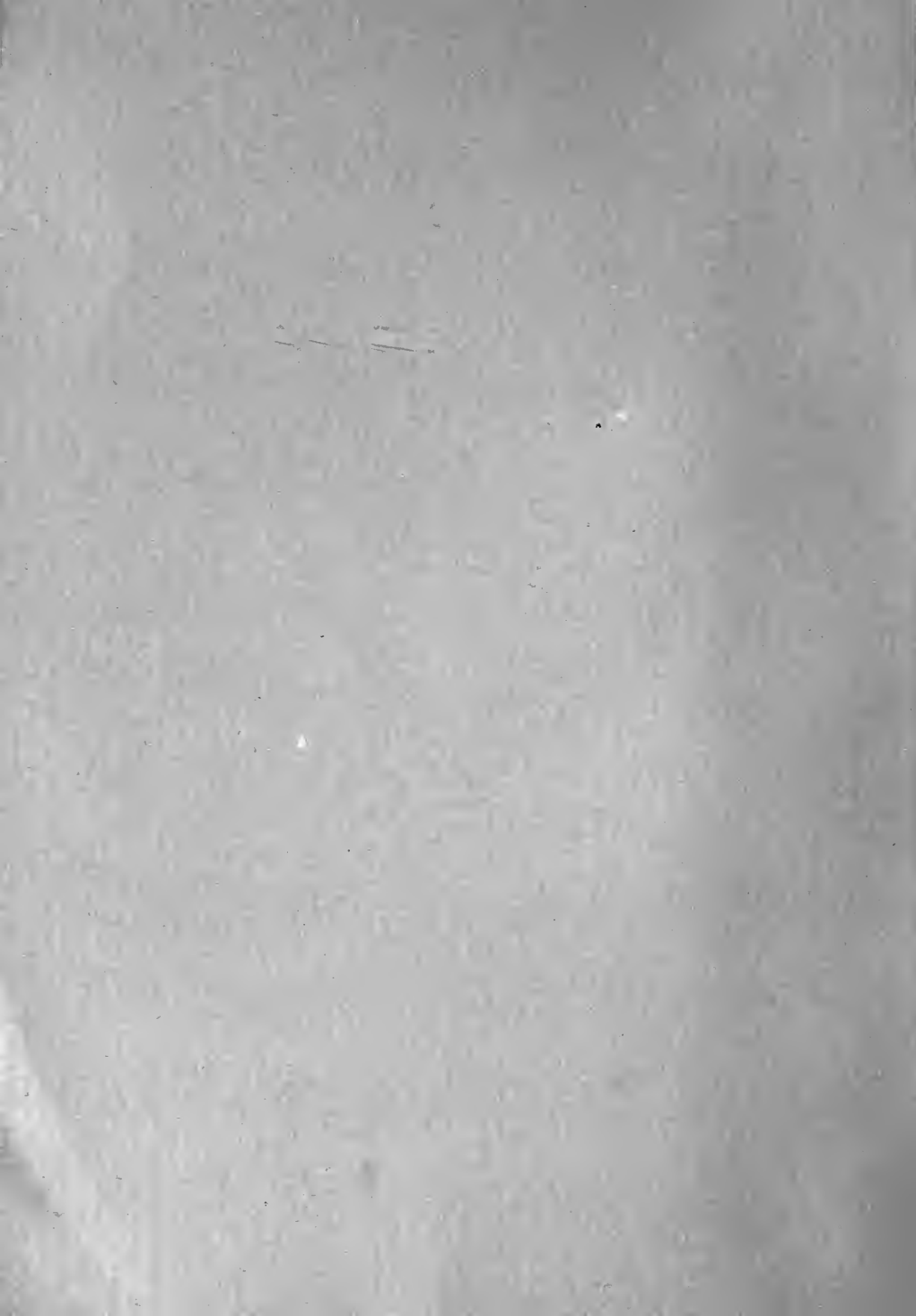


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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



"LIFE'S RACE WELL RUN,"

WITH

A SKETCH OF ITS HISTORY.

BY

*David
Parker*
E. H. PARKER, M. D.



ILLUSTRATED BY PROF. HENRY VAN INGEN.



POUGHKEEPSIE, N. Y. :
HIRAM S. WILTSIE,
322 MAIN STREET.

1884.

PS 2520
P47

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HAIGHT & DUDLEY, PRINTERS,
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Let us run with
patience
the race that
is set

Patience

the race that
before us



IFE'S RACE WELL RUN,
 IFE'S WORK ALL DONE,
 IFE'S VICTORY WON;
 Now cometh rest.

the
 light cometh
 when no
 man can
 work

Thanks
 be to God
 which giveth
 us the vic-
 tory.

Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that
 rest.

Neither shall there be mourning nor crying
nor pain any more.



SORROWS ARE O'ER,
TRIALS NO MORE,
SHIP REACHETH SHORE;
NOW COMETH REST.

And
God shall
wipe away
all tears from
their eyes.

Conduct
them in safety
to the haven
where they
would be.

Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from
their labors.

We walk by Faith and not sight.



There shall be no night there.

The sun is the light thereof.

FAITH YIELDS TO SIGHT.
DAY FOLLOWS NIGHT;
JESUS GIVES LIGHT;
NOW COMETH REST.

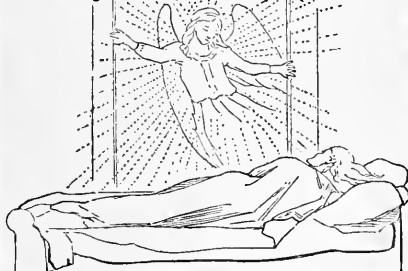
His rest shall be Glorious.

Rest in the Lord and wait for him.
patiently

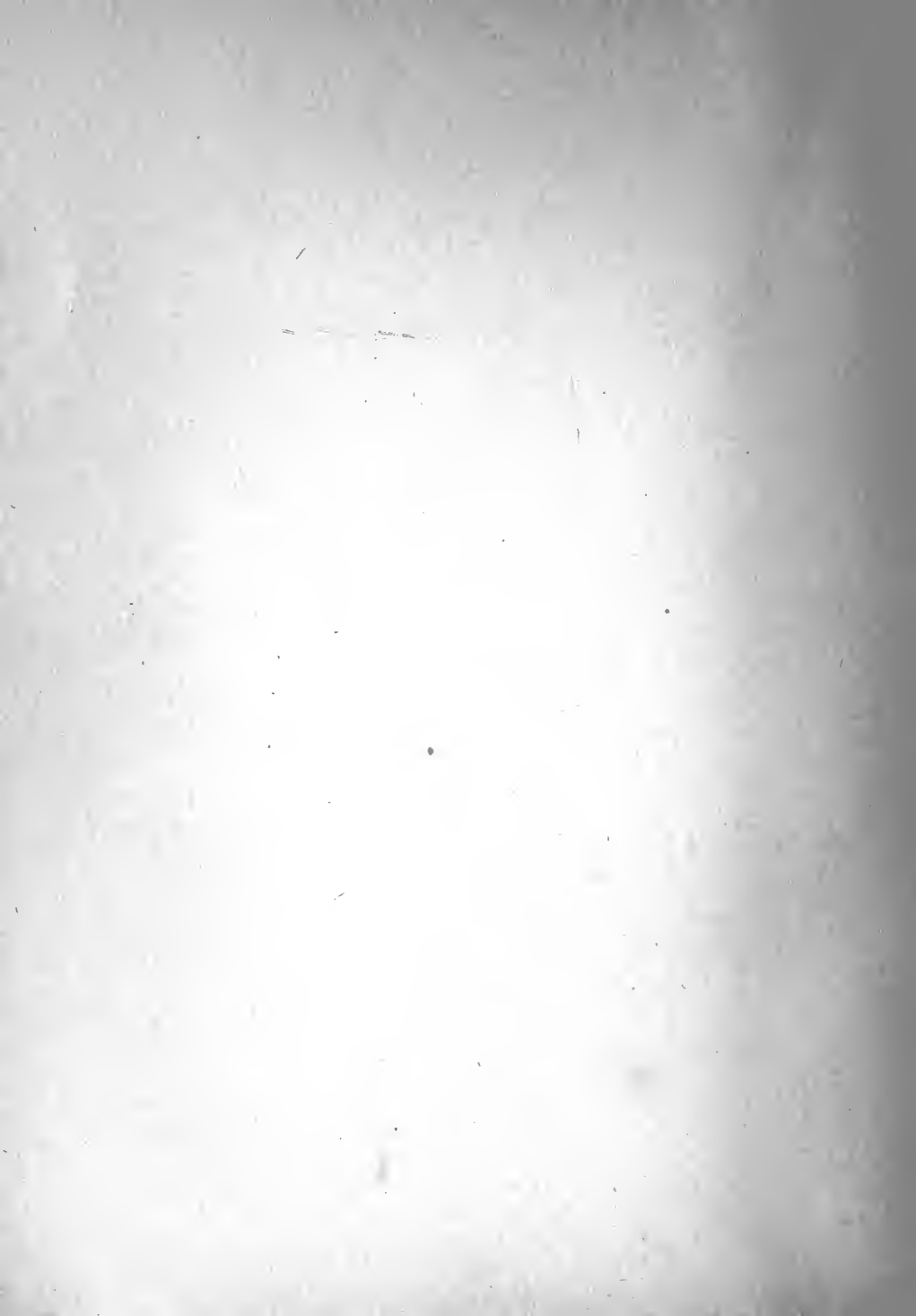
My times are
in thy hand

Even so will
that ye magnific

WE A WHILE WAIT,
BUT, SOON OR LATE,
DEATH OPENS THE GATE;
THEN COMETH REST.



In Adam all die



THESE LINES, few and simple as they are, have had a curious history. They were written by the undersigned, early in the year 1879, and were printed for use at a funeral in the spring of the same year. From one of the copies so printed, my friend, Prof. Wm. H. Crosby, of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., made a translation into Latin verse. By his suggestion, both the English and the Latin version were printed in the *New York Observer*, in its issue for May 13, 1880, his name being attached to the Latin version, and my own to the English.

I was not aware that the lines had attracted any attention, until, at the time of the funeral services of President Garfield, at Cleveland, Ohio, it was announced, in the newspapers, that this inscription was placed at the head of his coffin:

"Life's race well run,
Life's work well done,
Life's crown well won,
Now comes rest."

This, I supposed, was the imperfect remembrance of my lines as printed in the *Observer*, and, except that I was gratified that they should have thus lingered in anyone's memory, I thought no more about it.

In the Summer of 1882 I also saw it stated in a newspaper that the same lines had been used in Brompton

Cemetery, England, "In memory of Elizabeth Jones, who died May 18, 1881; for 14 years the faithful servant and friend of Alexandra, Princess of Wales, by whom this monument is erected." That this selection was made from the report of the Garfield obsequies I have no doubt. That it pleased me to have my lines attract the notice of so distinguished a lady I will not affect to deny; but I gave no further thought to the matter.

In the autumn of 1882, Mr. William H. Crosby received a letter from his brother, Professor Howard Crosby, of New York City, enclosing one from Mr. W. R. Rose, literary editor of the Cleveland, Ohio, *Sunday Sun*, asking Professor C. if he could tell him who was the author of the lines, and saying that there was great curiosity in Cleveland concerning them. Professor Howard Crosby did know, and his reply to Mr. Rose will be given subsequently. Meantime I make two extracts from the Cleveland *Sun*. The first appeared August 13, 1882, and is as follows:

"FOUR FAMOUS LINES."

"THE SENTIMENT THAT WAS INSCRIBED AT THE HEAD
OF THE GARFIELD CASKET."

"'Life's race well run,
Life's work well done,
Life's crown well won,
Now comes rest.'

"The readers of the *Sun* are no doubt familiar with the above lines, which first attracted attention at the time of President Garfield's funeral, appearing on a tablet at the head of the casket when the body lay in state in the catafalque in Monumental Park. Claims having been made by

various persons, either as to the authorship of the lines, or of having furnished them to the committee, a *Sun* reporter took it upon himself yesterday to get at the facts. At the time of the Presidential obsequies,—almost a year ago—Messrs. George W. Gardner and W. H. Eckman started out for the purpose of obtaining a suitable motto or verse with which to decorate the catafalque. After a fruitless search, they happened across the Rev. J. D. Jones, of the ‘Floating Bethel,’ who, having the lines in question in his memorandum-book, showed them to the gentlemen, and they, struck at first sight with their appropriateness, commissioned Mr. John Vanek to inscribe them on a suitable tablet.

“Further inquiry developed the fact that during the President’s illness a gentleman from Boston, then visiting the city, informed Mr. C. C. Baldwin, Secretary of the Western Reserve Historical Society, that he had come across an exceedingly pretty poem in the Latin language, but by a modern author, the following being a copy:—

“‘Itaque Relinquitur Sabbatismus Populo Dei.’—*Vulgate*.

“‘Cursus vitæ bene actus,
Opus vitæ omne factum,
Laurus vitæ acquisita ;
Nunc venit quies.

“‘Res adversæ præterlapsæ,
Res tentantes non inventæ,
Navis littus jam attingens ;
Nunc venit quies.

“‘Cedit nunc fides videndo,
Dies nocti supervenit,
Lux a Jesu impertitur ;
Nunc venit quies.

“‘Breve tempus nos manemus,
Sed aut jam aut saltem sero
Portam nobis mors recludit—
Tunc venit quies.’

“The theme is ‘There Remaineth therefore a Rest to the People of God,’ Hebrews iv. 9, and the translation of the first verse is the motto placed at the head of this article.

“Mr. Baldwin was so much impressed with the beauty of the poem that he caused it to be printed and distributed among his literary friends. After the news was received here of the President’s death, a life size photograph of him was exhibited in Teal’s window, and appended to it was a copy of the Latin poem. Owing to Mr. Baldwin’s absence from the city, nothing definite could be learned as to the authorship of the poem or to the person who gave it to Mr. Baldwin.”

The following, which is the second extract, appeared in the *Sun*, August 27, 1882:

“A LITERARY PROBLEM.”

“The query as to who is the author of the appropriate lines which were placed at the head of President Garfield’s coffin during the funeral ceremonies in Cleveland has excited interest far beyond the precincts of Cleveland, as will be shown by the following letter, recently received by a prominent lady of this city, from Mr. F. H. Mason, American Consul at Bale, Switzerland:

“‘UNITED STATES CONSULATE,

“‘BALE, July 17, 1882.

“‘DEAR MRS. ———:

“‘Let me recall myself to your remembrance, and trouble you with an inquiry.

“‘While Mrs. Mason and I were visiting recently in England, a dinner-table discussion arose as to the origin of the stanza which was inscribed and placed over the coffin of

President Garfield, when his remains lay in state in Cleveland last September. It was something like this:

“ ‘Life’s work well done,
Life’s race well run,
Life’s crown well won,
Now comes rest.

“ ‘No one seems to know definitely who the author of these lines may be, and a claimant for that honor has recently appeared in England. Mrs. Mason and I ventured to assure our friends that you, who were so prominently identified with the beautiful decorations at Cleveland, can tell all about it; and this is what I am taking the liberty to trouble you about.

“ ‘F. H. MASON.’

“ ‘The lady to whom the letter was addressed, being unable to enlighten the writer, communicated with a Harvard student acquaintance, who, in turn, referred the question to Mr. Justin Winsor, librarian of Harvard College, with the statement that Professor Crosby, of Boston, had been credited with the authorship. The following was Mr. Winsor’s reply:

“ ‘CAMPOBELLO, N. B., Aug. 20, 1882.

“ ‘SIR: Your note regarding the Latin verses reached me here, where I have no reference books. I do not imagine, however, they could help me much in tracing verses which seem to me so palpably modern. I have no knowledge of Professor Crosby.

“ ‘Very truly,

“ ‘JUSTIN WINSER.’”

The next publication by Mr. Rose was in the *Cleveland Sun* of September 17, 1882, and includes Prof. Howard

Crosby's letter before referred to. The article is as follows :

“LIFE'S RACE WELL RUN.”

“THE ORIGIN AND MUTATIONS OF A NOW FAMOUS POEM.”

“On the 13th of last August the *Sun* detailed the circumstance connected with the use of the famous stanza which was placed at the head of the bier during the Garfield obsequies. The article embraced the Latin poem—a translation of the first verse of which was the stanza referred to—and also stated that the name of the author was not known, but that the poem was obtained from Mr. C. C. Baldwin, Secretary of the Western Reserve Historical Society, and that he procured it from a Boston friend. By a singular coincidence, United States Consul Mason, now in Switzerland, wrote quite recently to a friend in this city desiring information concerning the author's name, and his letter was published in the *Sun* of August 27th. In view of the general interest in the subject which was aroused by the publication of these two articles, an attachè of this paper determined to ascertain, if possible, the name of the author, and whatever of history the poem might possess. In pursuance of this resolve he addressed letters of inquiry to a number of gentlemen prominent in both eastern and western literary circles, but—with one exception—the persons addressed promptly and courteously regretted their inability to answer the query. The exception noted was the answer of the Rev. Howard Crosby, the distinguished Greek scholar and the eminent clergyman of New York City, who kindly sent the annexed letter, which not only fully establishes the identity of the author, but also brings to light a very interesting bit of literary history:—

“DEAR SIR—The author of ‘Life's Race Well Run’ is Dr. Edward H. Parker, of Poughkeepsie. It was composed

by him in 1879, while riding in his gig. The Latin version was made by my brother, Professor William H. Crosby, of Poughkeepsie. Both English and Latin versions appeared in the *New York Observer*, May 13, 1880. I enclose a genuine copy of the verses, sent me by Dr. Parker himself. You see it differs from the copy you sent me in having only one 'well' in the first verse.

“‘Yours very respectfully,

“‘HOWARD CROSBY,

“‘ 115 East 19th Street.

“‘ New York, September 11, 1882.’

“The original poem, as per copy furnished by the Rev. Dr. Crosby, reads as follows :

“‘ There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.’

“‘ Life’s race well run,
Life’s work all done,
Life’s victory won,
Now cometh rest.

“‘ Sorrows are o’er,
Trials no more,
Ship reacheth shore,
Now cometh rest.

“‘ Faith yields to sight.
Day follows night,
Jesus gives light.
Now cometh rest.

“‘ We awhile wait,
But, soon or late,
Death opes the gate,
Then cometh rest.’

“The reader will observe the difference between the wording of the first verse of the poem just given and the four lines used during the obsequies, the latter reading :

“ ‘Life’s race well run,
Life’s work well done,
Life’s crown well won,
Now comes rest.’

“ But this dissimilarity is undoubtedly to be accounted for by the rather singular fact that Doctor Parker’s original poem, in English, after being rendered by Professor Crosby in Latin, was translated from the latter version back into English by some unknown writer, and in this way the changes in wording occurred. The extra use of the word ‘well,’ alluded to in the Rev. Mr. Crosby’s letter, probably was intended by the last translator to give a stronger rhythmical force to the lines, and the rendering of the ‘*Laurus vitæ*’ of the third line into ‘Life’s crown’ instead of ‘Life’s victory’ is only a simple variation of the same poetical figure. Another odd mistake was the general impression that the Latin version was the original form of the verses. But the Rev. Howard Crosby’s letter corrects this error, and adds another interesting link to the chain of memorable events which surrounded the funeral rites of the lamented Garfield.

“ It may interest many to learn that the Latin version, as printed in the *Sun* some weeks ago, has been rendered into English by a gentleman who was ignorant, as all of us were, that the Latin was itself a translation from original English. About the time that the discussion as to its origin began, Mr. C. C. Baldwin handed to Auditor Levi Bauer a copy of the Latin version, and pleasantly challenged him to render it into English. Mr. Bauer did nothing with it at the time, but a week or so later Mr. Baldwin and Mr. E. R. Perkins happening in the auditor’s office on business, the three sat down and went to work upon it, all three uniting in the translation, the versification alone being left solely to Mr. Bauer. As they proceeded, Mr. Bauer said he was satisfied

that the original was not Latin, as was generally supposed, but English. We give the version produced by these gentlemen, as it will prove curious and interesting to the reader to compare the two and note how the double transformation has affected it. The repetitions of the word 'well' in the first stanza was not, Mr. Bauer tells us, a strict interpretation, but a liberty deliberately taken with the original :

“‘Life’s race well run,
Life’s work well done,
Life’s crown well won ;
And now comes rest.

“‘All troubles o’er,
We strive no more,
Ship touching shore ;
And now comes rest.

“‘Faith yields to sight,
Day conquers night,
From Christ comes light ;
And now comes rest.

“‘Brief time we wait,
For soon or late,
Death swings the gate ;
And then comes rest.’”

One month later (Oct. 19, '82) Mr. Rose published another article upon the same subject, in the *New York Observer*. It goes over the same ground, giving a few additional incidents. Its closing paragraph is as follows :

“In the rooms of the Western Reserve Historical Society, in the city of Cleveland, are preserved and exhibited many sad mementoes of the dead President. The bier which bore the noble clay, the casket which enclosed the wasted form, the canopy which overhung the people’s chieftain—all are there ; and, in their midst, shine out the

tender lines which those who knew him best thought most fitting to raise above the revered dead."

Here, I supposed, was the end of the discussion. But two months later (Dec. 21, '82) the following article appeared in the *New York Observer*:

"THE GEN. GARFIELD EPITAPH."

"A CURIOUS SEARCH AFTER ITS ORIGIN—AN IMPUTATION
OF PLAGIARISM—THE FACTS OBTAINED."

"U. S. CONSULATE,
"MANCHESTER, ENG., Nov. 4, 1882.

"*To the Editors of the New York Observer* :

"The wide interest which has been awakened by the publication of the original lines which appeared in connection with President Garfield's funeral, at Cleveland, leads me to furnish some important data which cannot fail to further enliven a discussion already historic.

"A few days after the funeral of our martyr President, Mr. H. J. Fairchild, of Manchester, Eng., a partner in the great house of H. B. Claflin & Co., of New York, called at my office and requested me to ascertain, if I could, where the lines in question were procured by those who selected them for use in connection with the obsequies.

"He stated that an English friend had asked him to do so, because he believed that in 1878 he prepared an epitaph for his brother's monument in very nearly the same words. I at once wrote to Gen. D. G. Swaim, at Washington, with a view of finding out where the lines came from. His very kind and prompt reply was as follows: 'In regard to your query: I have run the matter down as closely as I can, and send you what, to me, is the original. I send you the

poem complete. It sounds very much like a quotation ; but, as you will see, I have consulted Mr. Spofford, Librarian of Congress, who has everything of that kind at his fingers' ends, and he is unable to find it contained in any former publication. So I think, in view of this, we can hardly consider Parker, whoever he is, a plagiarist :

“‘IN MEMORIAM,’”

“‘J. A. G.’”

“‘BY E. P. PARKER.’”

[“‘*From the Hartford Courant.*’”]

- “In peace, at last ! amid the hush of strife
Our ruler sleeps, secure from plaint or blame ;
The tragedy and triumph of his life
Blend in the splendor of unfading fame.
- “Our prayers and tears, poured out like summer rain,
Stayed not the Hand that works by pain and loss ;
His will be done, whose love ordains again
The bitter cup, the Garden, and the Cross.
- “Great Heart ; brave soul, capacious, cultured mind ;
Most gallant foe ; most gentle, generous friend ;
Scholar and soldier ; statesman, of the kind
Who purity with self-devotion blend !
- “The true unswerving aim, the purpose high,
The faithful patient service,—wear the crown :
No sacrifice that loyalty could try
But shines, transfigured, in his bright renown.
- “Not less the nation's than the household loss ;
Nor less the public than the private woe ;
His country's children share his children's cross—
Their tears of love and grief together flow.
- “*Life's work well done*, life's battle bravely fought,
And life itself poured out in duty's ways ;
Hallowed by death what lips and life had taught,
And name and memory wreathed with deathless praise ;—

“Thy glory like some newly-drawing sun,
 Resplendent breaks throughout our dark cloud of fate!
Immortal honor thou hast dearly won!
 Nor richer thou than we, in thine estate.

“Oh, good and faithful servant! fare thee well!
 ‘Well done!’ innumerable voices cry;
And happier through our salutations swell
 With ‘Welcome,’ ‘Welcome!’ from an answering sky.”

“Mr. Spofford wrote General Swaim: ‘In reply to your communication of 29th March, I have to advise you that the phrase quoted does not appear to be in any of the anthologies of poetical quotations.’

“The above evidence, as may well be supposed, was not conclusive, and I wrote Mrs. Garfield, in the hope that more light might be thrown on the subject. Her reply was in these words: ‘In answer to your inquiry concerning the source of the lines which were placed at the head of President Garfield’s casket, I am unable to give the source from which they came.’

“Disappointed again, and with curiosity sharpened, I felt that this was a strange circumstance, and feared that my efforts to trace the history of the lines were doomed to fail. A few days after receiving Mrs. Garfield’s letter, Consul Mason, of Bale, Switzerland, visited me. I mentioned the above facts to him, and he at once said that he could, he believed, find out through a friend in Cleveland, his old home, all about the matter. He wrote to his friend, and his letter brought forth a full statement, detailing the history of the poem containing the lines as they were written in America.

“However, the fact that *nearly the same lines* were composed in England in 1878, more than a year before the publication of Mr. Parker’s poem, has seemed to me worthy of being placed on record, and I requested Mr. Mills, who in-

dited them, to favor me with a full history of the same. He has kindly done so, and I send his letter to you (Mr. Mills having at my solicitation consented to its publication), believing that this true statement will be deeply interesting, for several reasons, to many readers of your journal. It furnishes evidence of the strange coincidences which sometimes occur in literary work, often giving rise to charges of plagiarism. Inventors frequently find that their supposed original ideas are already patented; but, in literary creations, such perfect parallels as are found in the now famous lines are rare.

“I am sure the publication of Mr. Mills’ letter in full will be best, as affording his own version of the facts; and the modest desire not to have his name mentioned is only characteristic of one whose merits are well known here, and who has always been disinclined to ‘let his light shine.’

“One word more: The copy of the poem sent me by General Swaim is credited to E. P. Parker; and if this proves to be the author of the lines used at President Garfield’s funeral, the suggestion of General S. that the lines might be a ‘quotation’ will show how nearly correct he was in his surmise,—as the underscored lines in the sixth stanzas of ‘E. P. P.’s’ poem are a quotation, probably, *from the poem under discussion.*

“Very truly yours,

“ALBERT D. SHAW.”

“COPY OF MR. MILLS’ LETTER.”

“NORTHWOLD, ALTRINCHAM,

“7th November, 1882.

“DEAR COLONEL SHAW:

“I return with cordial thanks the papers you lent me, having read them with an interest beyond the personal

interest which, as you know, I feel in the lines whose origin they discuss. Indeed, it is with some relief I find that the trouble I imposed on your good nature has resulted in the disclosure of a bit of literary history curious enough to reward you, quite apart from our original motives for the search. Assuming as I suppose we are bound to do, that the simultaneous and separate origin of one metrical triplet on two continents was a matter of pure coincidence, the circumstances attending the production and development into their present form of the American lines, and the mystery which seems still to exist about their use in connection with President Garfield's funeral, are, in themselves, sufficiently remarkable. As, however, you ask me to write down what I had already told you of my own share in the coincident production of the lines, I proceed to do so.

“ My brother Samuel died at Ashton-under-Lyne in 1877. He had been an active yet unobtrusive man in public matters, and was widely and affectionately known. About a year after his death I went to see his completed monument in the Dukinfield cemetery, and it occurred to me that two or three memorial lines should be added to the bare facts inscribed upon the stone. Knowing that the available space was small, and having always thought that brevity and a certain severe simplicity were the final, if not indispensable, graces of an epitaph, I determined to adhere as closely as possible to monosyllabic Saxon. I made three or four attempts, none of which seemed to me adequate, but I forwarded to my widowed sister-in-law the tiny slips of paper on which they were written, requesting her to take her choice, and I retained no copies. One of them ran as follows :

“ His work well done ;—
His race well run,
His crown well won,—
Here let him rest.

“Of the verbal accuracy of the last (fourth) line I am not absolutely sure, but I know it was a bare and monosyllabic translation of the conventional ‘Requiescat.’

“On reading the above quatrain, it occurred to me that it did not in a sufficiently distinctive way embody his own firm and earnest Christian creed, and I therefore expanded it as follows :

“His work well done,
His race well run,
His crown well won.
Gentle and just,
His soul is gone
To Christ, his trust :—
Here is but dust.

“With a further effort at compression, I wrote :

“Work well done,
Crown well won,
Tender and just,
Christ was his trust :—
Here is but dust.

“But this was the least satisfactory, as the effort at brevity resulted in a confused apposition of persons and things. I should add that no use was made of any of these forms, I believe, for want of space on the slab.

“In 1880 an old friend of mine, Dr. W. B. Hodgson, Professor of Political Economy at the Edinburgh University, died suddenly at Brussels. Soon after this event I wrote, at the request of his widow, a few memorial lines intended to concentrate into the brief form of an epitaph the main features of his career and character. At its close I introduced two lines which were a reminiscence of the old form, of which no public use had been made. The lines will, I believe, appear in the last page of the memoir of Dr. H. shortly to be published. As bearing on the matter in hand, however, I copy them here :

“ One born to teach
Clear thought, well-ordered speech,
And social law, for all through each ;
Devout on no dogmatic plan,
But praising God by serving man :
Testing all lore by honest sense,
Intolerant only of pretence ;
Wise, winning, witty to the end,
The trusted guide, the genial friend
Lies here, his work well done,
His rest well won.

“ This little tribute had been seen by two or three friends, to whom the subject of it had been known, and, amongst the rest, by my friend, Rev. Alex. MacKenna, of Bowdon. On the day when the obsequies of President Garfield were reported in our daily papers, Mr. McK. asked me (in the railway carriage, on our homeward journey from town) if I had seen the *Times* or *Standard*. On my replying in the negative, he informed me of the strange coincidence, exclaiming, ‘ They’ve put your verses over Garfield’s bier.’ On seeing the reports, I was even more struck than he, as the complete triplet appeared, which he had not seen, but which I knew I had employed on the former occasion. I endeavored afterwards to recover the old slips, but could not do so, as they had been lost or misplaced. My sister-in-law, however, remembered every line of the triplet, and fully confirmed my own version of them. Of course, we are now shut up to the conclusion of coincidence of thoughts and expression, and can only speculate curiously, as you and I have done, on theories of possible occult influences, bearing at once on two minds separated by great distance. It may be that, however unlikely we at first thought the *separate double production of a succession of lines of the same rhythm, rhyme, and idea*, we may—now that the impossibility of plagiarism seems demonstrated—

begin to think that when once the key-note was struck, as it might readily be in two minds given to the spinning of metre, the rest would follow by instinctive suggestion, very much as one tone sets vibrating to more than one ear the related harmonic tones which make up the triad of the common chord. But this, of course, can only be conjectural, and does not dissipate the whole cloud of mystery. You will have observed two differences between the American lines and my own: 1st, That instead of the word 'Life's,' at the beginning of each line in the former, I had used the possessive pronoun 'His'—probably from a preference, very natural at the time, for the personal over the general or abstract idea; and, 2d, that the order of the 'race' and the 'work' is inverted. But this latter difference is of little import, and scarcely disturbs the sense of identity.

"As you know, I have written this letter wholly on your request, not by way of laying any claim, much less of imputing any wrong. The very circumstantial account now given of the origin of the American version of the lines, though wonderful in its own way puts the theory of possible plagiarism wholly out of court. For the rest, I confess that the introduction of my name into any public discussion of the question would be painful to me personally.

"I am, dear Colonel Shaw,

"Yours very sincerely,

("Signed)

"JOHN MILLS."

Having published nothing myself concerning the lines— if I except a short note to Mr. Rose, which he gave to the *Cleveland Sun*, I thought it wise to reply to this, and the following communication appeared in the *Observer* a month later, (January 25th, 1883) :

“THE GARFIELD EPITAPH.”

“AND ‘PARKER, WHOEVER HE IS.’”

“*To the Editors of the New York Observer :*

“So far as one can judge, after reading the letters of Colonel Shaw and Mr. Mills contained in the *Observer* for December 21, it is about time that ‘Parker, whoever he is’ should make his appearance. *Adsum qui feci.*”

“No one, probably, has been more surprised than myself at the interest concerning the lines commencing ‘*Life’s race well run*’ shown in so many and so different directions. That this is due to the almost accidental use of the first stanza, though in a mutilated form, on the occasion of General Garfield’s obsequies at Cleveland, Ohio, I am well aware. But attention having been drawn to them and inquiry made as to their authorship, I take the liberty to send you a simple statement of their history, doing this the more readily because there has been a sort of suggestion that I have been guilty of plagiarism.

“To begin with this last matter, I say, emphatically and distinctly, that there has been no plagiarism on my part at least. If anything was ever original with any one, these lines were original with me. Written as they were, in the early part of 1879, they certainly could not have been plagiarized from the lines written by E. P. Parker,—with whom I do not have the honor of an acquaintance,—after General Garfield’s death; and those lines as quoted by Colonel Shaw have but one of mine incorporated in them. It is more probable that this was suggested by the report of the inscription at Cleveland.

“Mr. Mills’ claim is more curious, and I have no reason to doubt that he is entirely truthful in his statement, accepting the facts as a curious coincidence. But, if I understand him, he claims to have written these lines, with some

others, in 1878, and to have given the slips on which they were written to his sister-in-law, who cannot now find them, but remembers them perfectly,—and they were seen by no one else. It would be very easy for me to turn the tables on him by saying that it is very strange that such a claim should be put in on such evidence only as the memory of the claimant and of a connection of his. I might also point out the fact that the lines added in the two subsequent efforts fall away from the character and dignity of those under discussion,—so that in a literary court I should probably have the advantage.

“But, as I have said, I accept his statement as entirely truthful and accurate. But then, how could I have plagiarized that which was never put in print, and which existed only in the memory of two persons in England? It is absurd to suppose it, and I think that General Swaim will ‘hardly consider Parker, whoever he is, a plagiarist.’

“May I add a few words concerning the lines and their history? They were written early in 1879, on the occasion of the death of a valued friend of myself and my family, being the result of reflections on her busy, useful, Christian life, when I found myself obliged to take daily a long drive to see a patient. Medical men, I apprehend, do a large share of their thinking at such times; at any rate, I know I do. They were printed for convenience, that they might be sung at the funeral of my wife’s mother, which occurred a few months later, and it was then, I suppose, that my friend, Professor Crosby, first saw them. It was at his request that they were printed in the *New York Observer* about a year afterward. At that time our names were attached to them—his to the Latin, and mine to the English version. He took a liberty with the third line, making it ‘*Laurus vitæ acquisita*’, because he could not work the word *victory* into his measure. I am free to say I do not like the change.

Moreover, I have the vanity to think the original is better than the Cleveland version. I deliberately broke up the successive use of the word *well* for three times (my first form), though it cost me some labor to do so.

“You will not think it strange if I add that I look upon the whole *poem* (shall I venture to call it?) as an unit, intended to embody my thoughts of that rest which follows ‘the changes and chances of this mortal life.’

“I am yours respectfully,

“EDWARD H. PARKER, M.D.

“*Poughkeepsie, N. Y.*”

It is, perhaps, worth while to add to this that one of the newspapers published in Hartford, Conn., has, since Colonel Shaw's communication was published, claimed the authorship of the lines for the Rev. Dr. E. P. Parker of that city. The first half of the first line of the sixth stanza of his poem, as quoted by Colonel Shaw, is, as will be seen by referring to it, “Life's work well done;” and this is *all* the foundation that exists for this absurd claim.

It would be foolish in me to pretend that I have not been interested in this discussion.

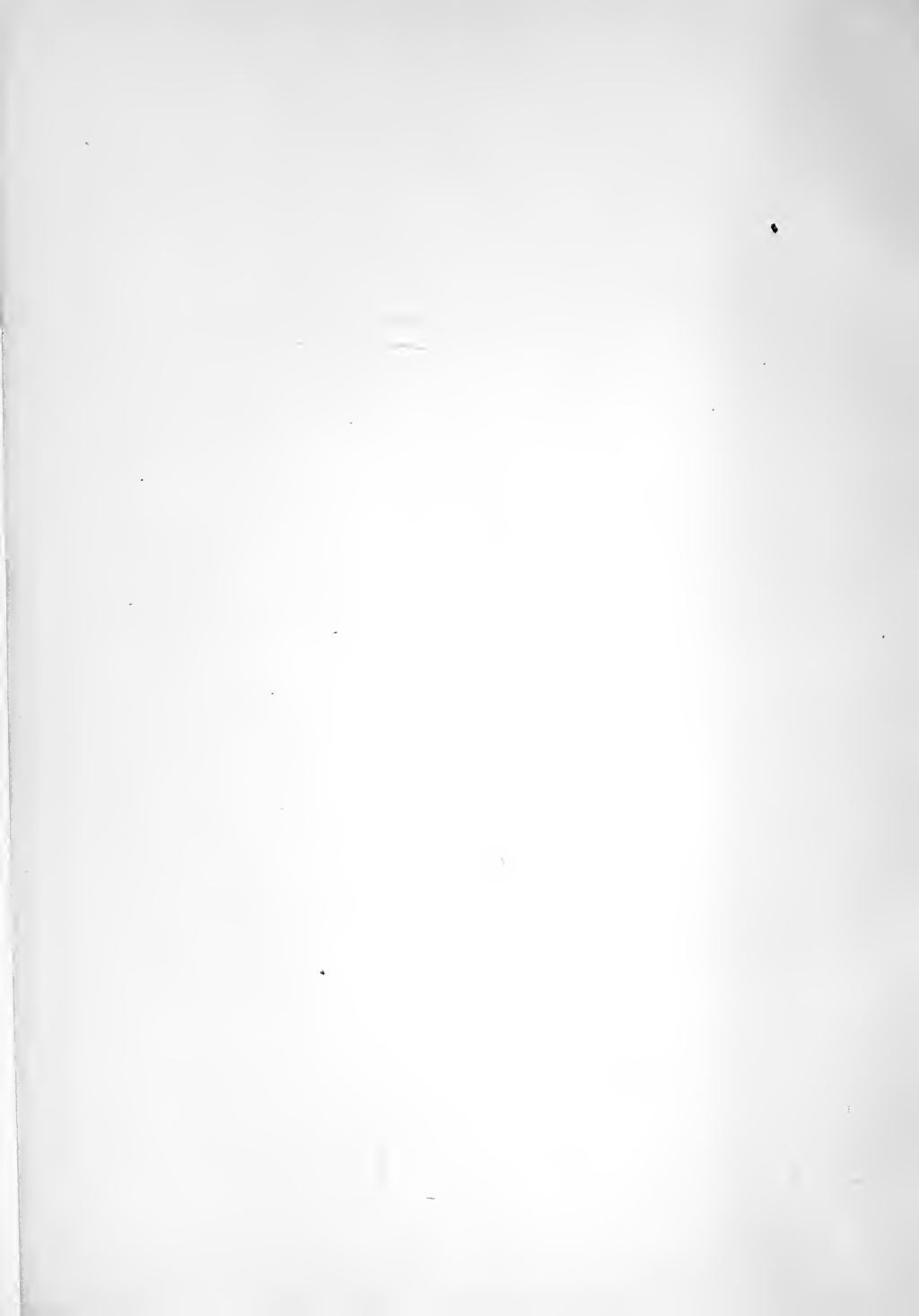
The whole gives an illustration of the difficulties which arise in translating from one language into another (in this case a double process), especially when under the limitations of a fixed measure. With each turn something of the aroma of the original will escape.

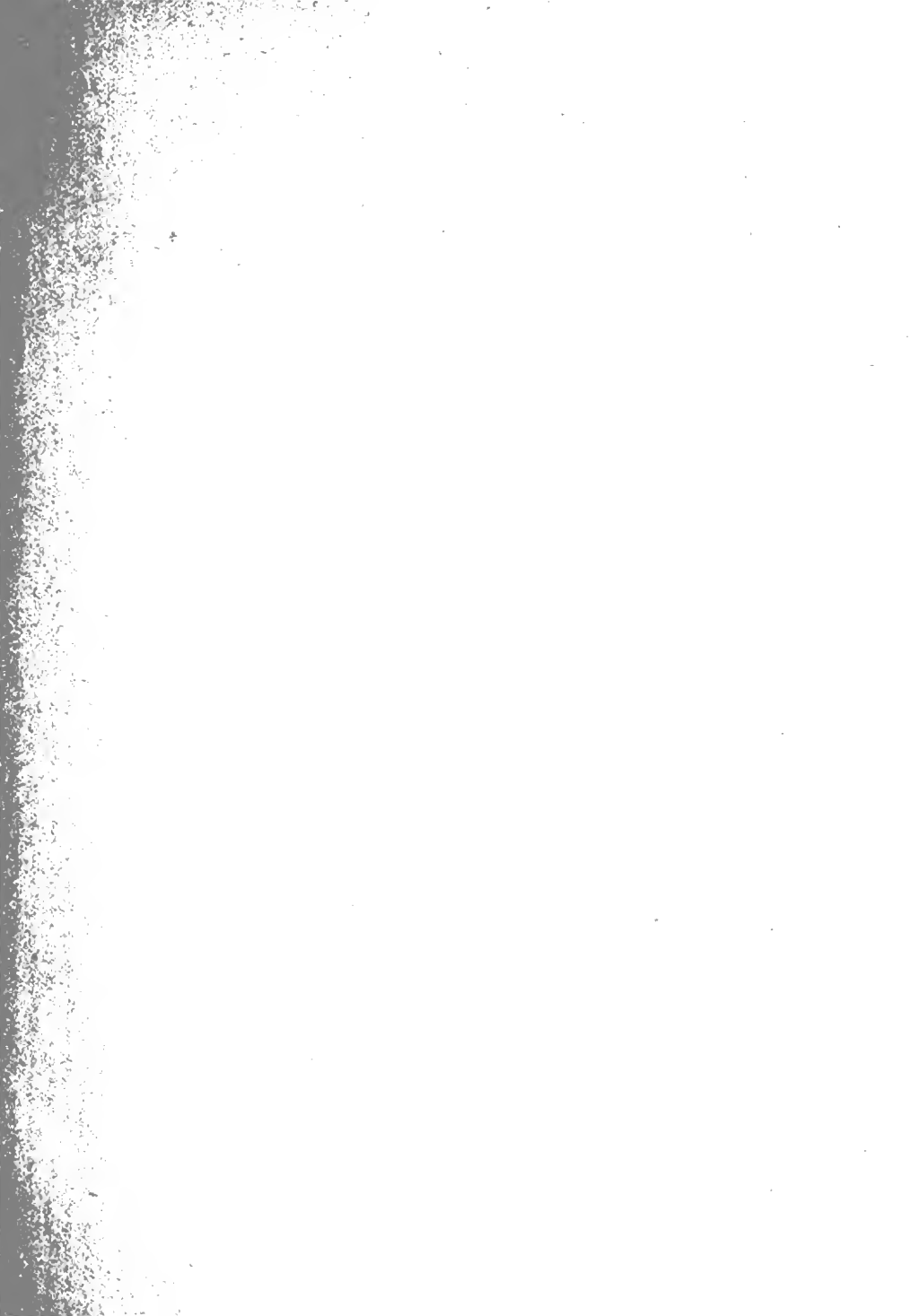
It also shows how trivial are the circumstances which may give rise to suspicions, or, at least, suggestions of plagiarism.

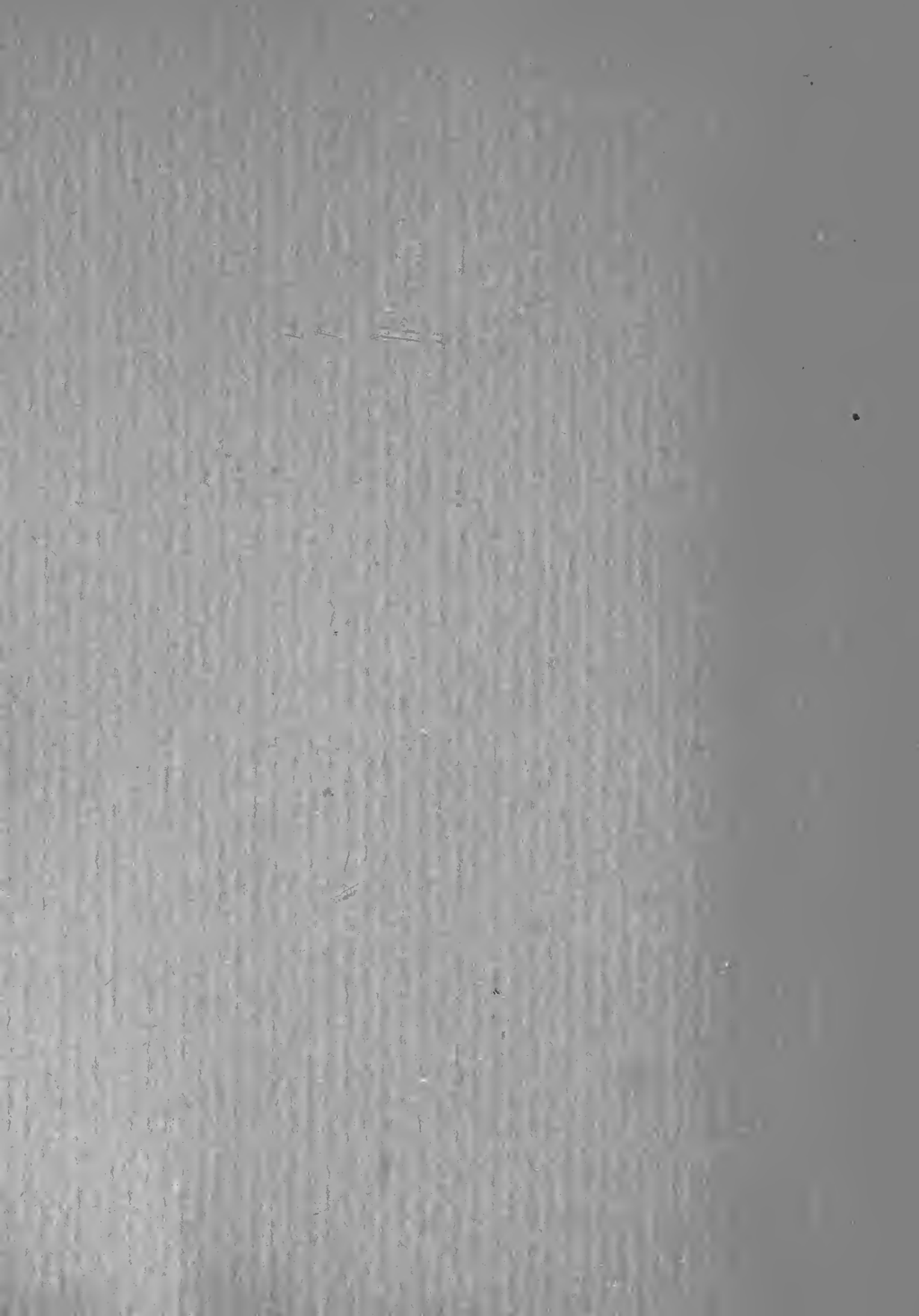
In conclusion, I will acknowledge that it touches me deeply that these simple lines have reached so many hearts.

EDWARD H. PARKER.

Poughkeepsie, N. Y.







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